Passfield resigned his office, thenceforth devoting themselves to a sympathetic and detailed study of the Soviet regime,[20] and being no more burnt in effigy.

VI

Thus the Government bumped along, dependent on the uncertain support of fifty-nine Liberals, harassed by discontented supporters, helpless before increasing unemployment and deepening depression, assembled conferences and opening negotiations, enraging many who had hoped for too much, scandalising many by refusing to be adventurous (as, by refusing to discontinue the Meerut Trial[21]); yet, like the Abbe Sieyes during the Paris Reign of Terror, remaining in existence, and that, given all the circumstances, being a not inconsiderable achievement.

Nor were either of the Opposition parries in a particularly happy plight. The fifty-nine Liberals, technically under the irresponsible leadership of Mr. Lloyd George, found themselves in most divisions divided in three, one-third voting with the Government, one-third against, and one-third abstaining, and were rapidly approaching the point when they had nothing to lose but their seats and what remained of their leader's money —the famous Coalition War Chest, cash value of many peerages, baronetcies and knighthoods bestowed in the days of the Coalition Government, but now sadly depleted. The more ambitious among the fifty-nine were even meditating abandoning politics altogether, so cruelly remote did office seem.

The other Opposition Party, the Conservatives, 260 strong, were also far from contented. Their leader, Mr.

Baldwin, had lost them an election by placarding the country with the slogan

[20] The result of their labour was published in 1935 in the form of two large volumes entitled *Soviet Communism: A New Civilisation?* In the Russian translation of this work the interrogation mark in the title was omitted.

[21] Three Englishmen and twenty-six Indians had been charged with sedition. The case was allowed to drag on for four years, severe sentences being imposed, though on appeal greatly reduced.